

Message Text

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SUBJECT: JAPANESE OPINION -- POLL ON EMPEROR SYSTEMS

SUMMARY: MAINICHI OPINION POLL TAKEN PRIOR TO EMPEROR'S U.S. VISIT FINDS LITTLE CHANGE SINCE FIVE YEARS AGO IN MAJORITY FAVORABLY INCLINED TOWARD EMPEROR AND CONTINUING IMPERIAL INSTITUTION AS SYMBOL OF NATON.

1. OCTOBER 16 DAILY MAINICHI SHIMBUN REPORTED ON MAINICHI-CONDUCTED OPINION POLL OF 4,457 RESPONDENTS (6,000 SAMPLE NATIONWIDE AGED 16 YEARS AND OVER, SELECTED BY RANDOM MULTI-STAGE METHOD) CONDUCTED SEPTEMBER 19-22 (I.E., PRIOR TO EMPEROR'S U.S. VISIT). ARTICLE DESCRIBING POLL FOCUSED MAINLY ON MATTER OF RETAINING SYSTEM OF DATING YEARS FROM ACCESSION TO RULE BY EACH EMPEROR AS AGAINST USING CHRISTIAN-ERA SYSTEM.

2. LAST FEW QUESTIONS PROBED ATTITUDES ON EMPEROR SYSTEM. QUESTION ABOUT FEELINGS TOWARD IMPERIAL HOUSEHOLD FOUND 32 PERCENT FEEL "RESPECT," 26 PERCENT "CLOSENESS," 36 PERCENT "INDIFFERENCE," 4 PERCENT "ANTIPATHY" AND 2 PERCENT "OTHER" OR UNCLASSIFIED

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"DON'T KNOW." BREAKDOWN BY POLITICAL PARTY PREFERENCE FOUND,

PREDICITABLY, HIGHEST FAVORABLE ATTITUDES (TOTAL OF "RESPECT" AND "CLOSENESS") AMONG PRO-LDP RESPONDENTS -- 75 PERCENT -- AND LOWEST AMONG PRO-JCP RESPONDENTS -- 26 PERCENT. UNFAVORABLE OPINION ("INDIFFERENCE" AND "ANTIPATHY") EXCEEDED FAVORABLE ONLY AMONG PRO-JCP RESPONDENTS (73 PERCENT) AND THOSE SUPPORTING NO PARTY (56 PERCENT).

3. ANOTHER QUESTION FOUND OVERHWELMING PROPORTION (80 PERCENT) FOR RETAINING EMPEROR IN PRESENT SYMBOLIC ROLE, AS AGAINST 7 PERCENT FOR INCREASING HIS AUTHORITY AND 10 PERCENT FOR ABOLISHING IMPERIAL INSTITUTION. THESE PERCENTAGES GENERALLY UNCHANGED FROM RESULTS OF JULY 1970 POLL. AMONG POLITICAL PARTY SUPPORTERS, LARGEST GROUP IN FAVOR OF RETAINING EMPEOR'S SYMBOLIC ROLE WAS DSP SUPPORTERS WITH 87 PERCENT, FOLLOWED BY LDP (86), KOMEITOO(81), JSP (80), NO PARTY PREFERENCE (78), AND JCP SUPPORTERS (55).

4. SOMEWHAT SMALLER PERCENTAGE (66 PERCENT) THOUGHT INSTITUTION WILL CONTINUE INDEFINITELY, WHILE 30 PERCENT SAID IT "MAY CHANGE SOME TIME." THESE FIGURES AGAIN APPROXIMATED THOSE OF FIVE YEARS AGO. THE MAINICHI POLLING OFFICE COMMENTED THAT "SYMBOLIC ROLE OF EMPEROR HAS TAKEN ROOT AMONG JAPANESE PEOPLE."
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